


A DEFENSE OF THE TWELVE
ANATHEMAS AGAINST THE BISHOPS
OF THE DIOCESE OF ORIENS

Prologue

EOPLE WHO focus their thoughts upon the most holy God and who choose to speak on the side of true doctrine reject the impure and empty words of the unholy heretics while their inner eye, hidden as it is deep within their hearts, remains fixed upon the divinely inspired Scriptures. They thereby fill their hearts with wholesome ideas and set their faces against those who distort the truth, and very vigorously too, as if they were saying, "We have been very zealous for the Lord."¹ Now, since Nestorius has been splurting out all his ill-considered speeches against Christ, the Savior of us all, and has been stirring up from its very foundations that supreme issue itself, the mystery of the Incarnation, we got to the point where we would have to fight for the doctrines of the faith, especially as it would be extremely risky to remain silent on such a matter and also because we were getting absolutely nowhere by our frequent warnings to him to desist from such blasphemies. We therefore picked out his main arguments and then resolutely anathematized them, or rather, all those who would subscribe to them, being as we were persuaded by the blessed Paul, who said, "If anyone preaches to you contrary to what you received, let him be anathema; and even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you contrary to what you received, let him be anathema."² Now, I do not know whether the people who seem to be so critical of this action of ours are so because they

1. 1 Kgs 19.14.

2. Gal 1.9, 8.

share Nestorius's opinions or because, although officially they reject his doctrine, they are nonetheless trying as far as possible to ally themselves with him and to make out that it is we, who are trying to mount a defense of Christ our Savior, who are the ones who should be vilified! One can only assume that his attacks on false teaching recommended themselves to them as evidence of a genuine love for Christ. Even now they have not acted as they should. How so? By making enemies out of those very people who, had they imitated them instead, would have received the crown of incorruptibility as well. And so they launched their attack on my anathemas as being ill-conceived and wrote something against each of them in turn—the conclusions and incomprehensible ramblings of their own minds. They thought to beguile their readers and anyone else that might chance unprepared upon their writings. That is why we felt obliged to place truth in the frontline and repel their attack, thereby to unmask our opponents as mere conflict-mongers and prove that truth-seekers are their enemies. So, in what follows, each section is headed by one of the anathemas, to which we have appended their comments followed by our own thoughts. In doing so we are making use of the divine Scriptures as our skilled judges, and we request a fair and blameless judgment from those who know the truth.

First Anathema

If any do not confess Emmanuel to be truly God and, on this basis, the holy Virgin to be the “Mother-of-God” (since she bore in the flesh the Word of God made flesh), let them be anathema.

The Orientals' Critique

Who would really agree with him that the Word of God made flesh was born “in the flesh”? For if she gave birth “in the flesh,” it would no longer have been as a virgin. And if (as he maintains) she gave birth as a virgin rather than in a way that is proper to the divine, what would we then do with the verse that says, “The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the

Most High will overshadow you”?³ How could it have been that the star miraculously appeared and pointed her out? Or how could the Magi have traversed Persia under its guidance, sought out the child, found it, and then offered their gifts both to him whom they recognized as well as to him whom they physically saw? Or how could angels have descended from heaven onto the nativity, have intermingled with shepherds, and have sung, “Glory to God in the highest, and upon earth peace, goodwill among men”?⁴ Do such facts relate to a birth “in the flesh” or to one that is proper to the divine? On the other hand, were we heedlessly to fall in with what he is saying, then we would have to imagine a change in the Word, a transformation into flesh, and thereby to suppose that he became both “a sin and a curse,”⁵ if, that is, we fail to attend to what follows logically from his propositions and to what they presuppose, as well as the usage of Scripture itself. We understand instead that, in line with the Gospels’ meaning, the Word’s “becoming” flesh is really a “tabernacling” in the flesh.

Cyril's Defense

Wise John clarifies the mystery of salvation brought about by the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten when he writes, “and the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.”⁶ The blessed Fathers who met that time at Nicaea understood this correctly and so said that he, the Word born of God the Father, the one through whom the Father made all things, Light from Light, true God from true God, became flesh and became a man, that is, that he was united to flesh that possessed rational soul and that he became a man while also remaining God. There is no one who doubts that the union came about without change or confusion, while, as I said, the Word of God remained what he is, even though he became flesh (since he is unalterable by nature). For what is said to have “become flesh” did not change into the nature of flesh, but is rather thought of as existing alongside the flesh and being united to it.

3. Lk 1.35.

5. 2 Cor 5.21; Gal 3.3.

4. Lk 2.14.

6. Jn 1.14.

This is what the blessed Fathers were thinking of when they gave the holy Virgin the title of "Mother-of-God." They believed that she bore the Son, become flesh and become a man, the very one through whom the Father made all things. Nestorius, who came up with these blasphemies that were quite new to us, opposed this understanding and decided that the title "Mother-of-God" was totally inappropriate. I quote:

I often asked them, "Are you suggesting that the blessed Virgin gave birth to the divinity?" Immediately they recoil from the expression, and respond, "No, who would be so disgustingly blasphemous as to say that the woman who gave birth to the temple also created God within herself by the Spirit?" If I then go on to ask, "What, then, is wrong with my suggesting that we abandon this title and agree on the normal way of indicating the two natures?" then this way of putting things is suddenly considered to be blasphemous! Either be transparent and confess that blessed Mary gave birth to the divinity, or else, if you are prepared to abandon this title as blasphemous, why then do you pretend that you have not said the very things that I have myself said?

He is playing a game! He is profanely seducing those who call the Virgin "Mother-of-God" into thinking that they must thereby necessarily confess that the pure and self-subsistent divine nature became a fruit of the flesh and that it was the woman who gave rise to the Word of God's very existence! We want to make it quite clear that we wholly reject any such position. We are not so foolish as willfully to think what one ought not to. What we do say, however, is that according to the Scriptures the Virgin gave birth to the Word of God, which had become flesh, that is, a man, and further that she bore him "in the flesh," that is, "in the manner of the flesh." It was God the Father who divinely begot the Son, who was also God, from his own self. Since "what is begotten of flesh is flesh,"⁷ the Virgin, being as she was flesh, begot in the flesh. By calling it "in the flesh" one is not denying the miracle of his nativity, nor is one making redundant that power of the Holy Spirit by which he formed the infant within his mother. Rather, it is simply to teach that, just as God, in line with his own nature, begets divinely, that is, in a manner proper to the divine, so also a man begets in a manly way, or flesh in a

7. Jn 3.6.

fleshly way. Seeing as the Word is by nature God, even when he became flesh, he must have come forth in a manner that is proper to the divine, that is, as befits one who is truly God. After all, he is the only person whose mother had never had intercourse; and she, who gave birth to him in the flesh, remained a virgin.

So I am astonished that the very people who shrink from calling the holy Virgin "Mother-of-God" still say that she gave birth in a manner proper to the divine.⁸ After all, a normal man is not born in such a way. They also mention that the Magi "offered their gifts both to him whom they recognized as well as to him whom they physically saw." But in saying so, they are dividing the one Lord Jesus Christ into a duality after the union. He whom they recognized became visible not because his nature had been transformed, but because he was united to the visible body.

If so, then how can the sacred Scripture say that the holy apostles "became eye-witnesses and servants of the Word,"⁹ when it is manifestly obvious that the Word of God the Father is incorporeal and intangible? I may note also that the holy disciples said, "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, which we have looked at with our eyes, and which our hands have touched, concerning the Word of life."¹⁰ Therefore, these gifts must have been offered to a single individual, that is, to Christ, insofar as the same individual is at the same time both God and man. This is why there were choirs of holy angels at his nativity, and armies of spirits proclaiming him Savior and Redeemer.

Now when in considering the evangelist's expression, "the Word became flesh,"¹¹ they claim to be worried that, by keeping to the precise meaning of the term "became," they are implying that some sort of change occurred within the divine nature, I do applaud their concern, but am shocked that they therefore distance themselves from the expression and from its correct

8. In Andrew's critique, being born "in a manner proper to the divine" was set up as mutually exclusive to being born "in the flesh." Cyril, of course, asserts that both are true in the case of the Incarnation.

9. Lk 1.2.

10. 1 Jn 1.1.

11. Jn 1.14.

and required meaning, and that they make out that to say "the Word became flesh" amounts to saying that he became "a curse and a sin!"¹² How can they not have realized that the blessed evangelist, while using the expression "became," excluded any notion of change by immediately adding the words, "and he tabernacled among us"? Even to dare the suggestion that the Word became flesh in such a way that he could actually be said to have become a sin and a curse is both absurd and illogical.

In reality he did not himself "become" either a sin or a curse. He was, however, "counted among the lawless,"¹³ despite being innocent, so as to abolish sin,¹⁴ and he was called "accursed,"¹⁵ despite being the one who blessed creation, so as to remove the curse that hangs over us and set free from punishment those who believe in him. So, strictly speaking, he did not become a curse and a sin, but rather he was given these names so that he might abolish both the curse and the sin. Had he after all become flesh in that sort of way, he would thereby have abolished the flesh as well as the sin and the curse. He would not have become a man or been truly incarnate. The mystery would have been a matter of appearance only; his becoming a man would have been purely nominal, and any hope of resurrection would have been obliterated once and for all. Into whose death were we baptized?¹⁶ Where is the "word of faith which we proclaimed"?¹⁷ For we are saved by confessing that Jesus is Lord and believing that "God raised him from the dead."¹⁸ Have we placed our faith in a mere man, someone just like one of us? Are we no longer to worship the Word who appeared among us in human form?¹⁹ Did he not take upon himself the servant's form even though, as God, he was free? Did he not humble himself, despite having a right to divine transcendence? He shares his form with the Father, he is on the level of the Father, and did he not condescend to empty himself, all the while bestowing his beneficence upon creation out of his very own resources?

12. 2 Cor 5.21 and Gal 3.13, as quoted by Andrew in his critique.

13. Lk 22.37; Is 53.12.

14. Cf. Rom 6.6.

15. Gal 3.13.

16. Cf. Rom 6.3.

17. Rom 10.8.

18. Rom 10.9.

19. Phil 2.7.

Let us be rid of such stupid ideas. The blessed Fathers initiated us into the mysteries in a quite different way. They said that the Word of God the Father was made flesh and genuinely became a man, without change or confusion, although just how this mystery occurred cannot really be put into words. As a testimony of what I have said, I shall quote some of the things that these Fathers have written:

The testimony of Peter, bishop of Alexandria:

So the evangelist quite rightly says that "the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us."²⁰ It is clear that this is why the angel could greet the Virgin by saying, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you."²¹ Now what Gabriel said was, "the Lord is with you," not, "God the Word is with you." The implication is that he was begotten within his mother and that he became flesh, as it is written, "The Holy Spirit shall come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for this reason he who is born is holy and shall be called God's Son."²²

The testimony of Athanasius, archbishop of Alexandria:

So, since the flesh was begotten of Mary, Mother-of-God, he himself, who brings other things into existence, is said to have been born so that he might make our birth²³ his own.²⁴

The testimony of Athanasius again, from his letter to Epictetus:

How did so-called Christians even consider doubting whether the Lord, who came out of Mary, while being essentially and naturally God's Son, is also, in his flesh, from David's seed and from holy Mary's flesh, while some have been so rash as to suggest that Christ, who suffered and was crucified in the flesh, is neither Lord, nor Savior, nor God, nor is he the Father's Son? Or how can people who say that the Word has descended onto a holy man, as if he were just a prophet instead of actually becoming a man by taking a body from Mary, hope to call themselves Christians? They are suggesting that Christ is one individual while the Word of God, who before Mary and for all eternity was the Father's Son, is a different individual! How can people who say that the Son is one thing and the Word of God something else really be Christians?²⁵

It is these judgments of the holy Fathers that have been our lead. Anyone who teaches otherwise or harbors a different opin-

20. Jn 1.14.

22. Lk 1.35.

24. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3.33.

21. Lk 1.28.

23. Or possibly, "our origin."

25. Athanasius, *Ad Epictetum* 2.

ion is veering off the main highway. The following quotation demonstrates that it was quite normal for the holy Fathers to say that Christ was begotten “in the flesh”; hence it is all the more appropriate for everyone else, not least ourselves. It goes like this:

Of the bishop of Iconium:

You could never be begotten in the Spirit unless he had been begotten in the flesh. If he did not adopt the form of the servant, you could never attain to the glory of being adopted as children.²⁶

Hence it is quite clear that the expression “in the flesh” is simply equivalent to “according to the flesh” in just the same way that the expression “in the divinity” is equivalent to “according to the divinity.”²⁷

☩ Third Anathema

If any divide the concrete existences of the one Christ after the union, connecting them with a connection that is merely one of dignity, authority, or power, rather than by a convergence at the level of a natural union, let them be anathema.

The Orientals' Critique

Let us recall once more something that he himself²⁸ said in his first treatise which implied that he was speaking of two concrete existences:

In terms of his very own nature, the Word from God the Father has not been sanctified on his own. If there is anyone who thinks that the one born of the holy Virgin was anointed and sanctified on his own, then this is why he was given the name of “Christ.”²⁹

26. Amphilochius of Iconium, *Frag.* 3, from a work entitled *On the Nativity according to Flesh*, ed. C. Datema, *Amphilochii Iconiensis opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978).

27. Cyril is showing that the Greek expressions *sarkikôs* and *kata sarka* are synonyms.

28. I.e., Cyril.

29. *Ep.* 1 (*To the Monks*) 15–16. The excerpt quoted here is grammatically incomplete. Cyril fills out the citation below. See p. 141.

So how is it, then, that he has now forgotten what he said and is combining the natures into a single concrete existence, confusing them and calling the divine union “natural”? Who would ever accept the idea that the divine union, which was part of the mystery of God’s salvation plan, is “natural”? If the union were a “natural” one, where does that leave grace? Where does it leave the divine mystery? We have been teaching that, because the natures have been appointed by the God who appoints all things, they must of necessity be subservient to logical consequences. Or will the whole plan of salvation turn out, by some sort of revolution of natural logic, to be in line with that notorious man Apollinarius’s ridiculous and fabulous views about the millennium?³⁰

Cyril’s Defense

Paul, who is God’s mouthpiece, in his role as steward of the divine mysteries and the one through whom Christ himself speaks,³¹ clarified for everyone just how the Only-Begotten Word of God became a man. He says, “For surely it was not angels he took for himself, but Abraham’s seed; that is why he had to become like his brothers in every way, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest with respect to God.”³² Our statements are protected by absolutely orthodox judgments. We are constantly guided by the divinely inspired Scriptures, and we hold what the Fathers have said in the highest esteem.³³ In fact we treat that as divine law. We therefore deny that the Word of God the Father took for himself either the nature of the holy angels or even his own nature. Instead, in line with what the Holy Scriptures say, we believe that he overshadowed the holy Virgin (that is, the power of the Most High Father did)³⁴ and

30. Apollinarius was charged by Basil (*Ep.* 263.4) with a literalist view of the millennium in which “we will become Jews once again.” Andrew is suggesting that, because Cyril’s view of the union has robbed Christian salvation of its effectiveness, it has a similar effect to Apollinarius’s eschatology.

31. 1 Cor 4.1; 2 Cor 3.13.

32. Heb 2.16–17.

33. “Fathers”: *theēgorôn*, lit., “those who speak for God,” which sometimes refers to the authors of Scripture, sometimes to the Fathers of the Church.

34. Lk 1.35.

formed for himself a body from her, albeit through the working of the Holy Spirit, and became a man and was called son of Abraham and of David. He did not in any way, by becoming a man, cease to be what he truly is, the Son of God the Father; rather, even when he became flesh, he remained in his divine nature, transcendence, and glory, because, as God, he is unalterable and above all change. He is, then, one and the same subject, Son and Lord, both before and after the Incarnation. To divide the single Son into two, and thereby to dissolve the genuineness of the union by splitting it up into bits, putting the man over here and the god over there, separate from each other, is an offense of the very highest sacrilege. Nestorius had something like this in mind when he dared to say the following:

"May you have the same attitude as did Christ Jesus, who, although he was in God's form, did not intend to grasp at equality with God; instead he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant."³⁵ Paul does not here say, "May you have the same attitude as did God the Word who, although being in God's form, took upon himself a servant's form"; instead, he takes "Christ" as a name that connotes both of the natures. He avoids any risk by saying that he took upon himself the servant's form and calling him God, dividing up the expressions between the two in a way that cannot be faulted.³⁶

In another explanation, he says,

"That at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."³⁷ I revere him who is borne for the sake of the bearer; I worship the visible for the sake of the hidden. God is indivisible from him who is visible. I do not divide the honor of him who is indivisible. I divide the natures, but I unite the worship.³⁸

And then in a further explanation,

35. Phil 2.5-7.

36. A quotation from Nestorius's first sermon against the title "Mother-of-God"; see F. Loofs, ed., *Nestoriana, Die Fragmente des Nestorius* (Halle, 1905), 254,5-12.

37. Phil 2.10-11.

38. Another quotation from the same sermon (Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 261,20-262,6). This was a well-quoted passage, used, for example, both in Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* (Ep. 17) and in his *Letter to Acacius of Melitene* (Ep. 40) to indict the bishop of Constantinople.

Call him who assumes, God; add that the one who is assumed is the form of a servant; then introduce the honor due to their being connected, that they both hold their authority in common, that the honor is the same for both. Acknowledge the unity of the honor, even though the natures both persist.

Do you see how he is always splitting up the natures, even while he says that he “unites the worship,” refers to their authority as being “in common,” and calls their unity merely one “of honor”? But if something is held in common, it cannot be common to one, but always to two or more things understood to be individual and separate. So why, then, have they thrown such an enormous accusation against a statement that so effectively anathematizes all such things? What is so absurd about our rightful concern to protect our brothers and sisters by opposing sound doctrine to those disgusting and inopportune statements of Nestorius?³⁹

Now, since they claim that I contradict myself, and to prove this they have quoted from my letter to the holy monks, I think I ought to make some pointed remarks in response. They say that even “he himself” talks about two concrete existences, and they seem to reckon the fact that we have opted to use the same words as they would to be quite some rebuke. First I must quote in full the relevant part of the letter, and then I shall add some more so as to show just how they have deliberately misrepresented everything. I quote:

In terms of his very own nature, the Word of God the Father has not been sanctified on his own. If there is anyone who thinks that the one born of the holy Virgin was anointed and sanctified on his own, and that this explains why he was given the name “Christ,” then let him go on and explain how this anointing would suffice to prove that the one being anointed shared equally in the honor due to God who is over all, and that he sits on the same throne.⁴⁰

This Nestorius, who keeps making up ever new profanities, frequently asserted that the Word of God is individually named “Christ,” while he to whom the holy Virgin gave birth is another

39. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 354,7–11.

40. *Ep. 1 (To the Monks)* 15–16. Cyril now quotes the whole sentence, which was grammatically incomplete in the previously quoted version. See n. 29, p. 138.

Christ, a separate individual. That is why we dismissed any such doctrine outright as totally degrading as well as being miles off the truth, and we have asserted instead that the Word of God the Father, considered on his own, was neither anointed with the oil of joy by himself, nor was there some other son who existed wholly on his own as a man, alongside the Word of God, and who came from the holy Virgin. In fact, we insist that everyone confess Christ to be one, the Only-Begotten Word of God made flesh and made man, for "there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism."⁴¹ So it is absolutely obvious to anyone who normally holds orthodox opinions that these people have falsified my intentions in writing the above, and that they are thereby slandering the truth.

Furthermore, looked at from a different point of view, there would be nothing contradictory in thinking that, at the level of nature, the flesh is something quite different from the Word that was begotten of God the Father. In fact it would be perfectly reasonable to think so, and could not be gainsaid. And of course the Only-Begotten is, in turn, something different at the level of his own nature. But to acknowledge this is not the same as separating the natures after they have been united. Anyone who really wanted to come to grips with the real meaning of this mystery and get to the bottom of it would appreciate what I said at the start, that what the Word (being God) took to himself was not his own nature but Abraham's seed;⁴² and also that his holy body, which is of Abraham's seed and which the man took from the holy Virgin when he emerged, the purpose of which was that the Only-Begotten might become like his brothers and be called the firstborn,⁴³ is not consubstantial with the Word that was begotten of God. Even though, however, the body and the Word of God the Father belong to different natures, there is still only a single Christ and Son, God and Lord, despite his becoming flesh. This idea of dissolving the means by which a genuine union occurred by keeping the concrete existences apart is very damaging. They end up each as a separate individual, connected by nothing but an external relationship based on degrees of honor.

41. Eph 4-5.

42. Cf. Heb 2.16.

43. Cf. Heb 2.17; Rom 8.29.

If we were to refer to the union as “natural,” we would be speaking accurately since the divinely inspired Scriptures usually use the term in just this way. Paul, for example, God’s mouth-piece, wrote somewhere, “We were children of wrath by nature, as also are the rest.”⁴⁴ Now no one would ever say that God’s anger is really something that is “by nature,” and so imply that sinners should be thought of literally as its children, else we would turn out to be no different from those who are diseased with Manichaeism. Rather, the expression “by nature” here simply means “in truth.”

So then, we affirm that the union occurred “naturally” out of two unequal elements, divinity and humanity, without thereby either confusing or blending the natures together, despite what our opponents might say. We also consistently insist that there is a single Christ, Son, and Lord. We have nothing to do with Apollinarian doctrine, for we must keep our distance from those who have already been condemned for bringing the truth into disrepute.

✠ Fourth Anathema

If any allocate the sayings in the evangelical and apostolic writings to two persons, or concrete existences, whether those spoken by the saints about Christ or those he used about himself, and then attribute some of them to a man who is thought of separately from the Word of God, and others only to the Word of God because they are more appropriate to God, let them be anathema.

The Orientals’ Critique

It is important now to recall some of his very own pronouncements. He wrote:

Even when you hear that “he advanced in age and wisdom and grace,”⁴⁵ you should not think that it follows that God’s Word progressed towards being wise, nor should you be so rash as to suggest,

44. Eph 2.3.

45. Lk 2.52.

without thinking, that this increase in age, wisdom, and grace is simply attributable to the man.⁴⁶

Even though Cyril is here denying the very witness of Scripture, which actually teaches that this growth occurred in terms of the Lord's visible flesh, we do not need here and now to make a full refutation of this anathema, since what we have already said above shows that he speaks in terms of two concrete existences, and that he contradicts himself.

But there is absolutely no need at all to match up different verses to two different persons, or to two concrete existences, or two sons, which would mean dividing up the union, the single Son. Whatever sort of argument or methodology you use, the perfect union simply cannot be divided, nor can the single Son. Now because we have held onto this perfect union by agreeing to the formula of one Son and Christ and Lord, everything that is said about him must be taken as being said about this one, individual Son. So it is the significance of the united natures that makes it appropriate to predicate all these expressions of the Son. But does he really need to be so extreme in his refusal to divide up the various things that are said in the Gospels, whether it be those that the Lord says about himself or those that are quoted in the apostles' writings?

You see, if we do not categorize these expressions at all, then how would we oppose the Eunomians and Arians who blend all the sayings together, put them under a single nature, and so blasphemously introduce human baseness into the transcendent nature of unsullied divinity? And what are we supposed to think about all those things that the Lord said because he had a visible, fleshly nature, such as, "I did not come to do my own will," and, "I received the command as to what to say and what to speak," and, "I do nothing of myself," and, "I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," and so forth?⁴⁷ Although the sayings remain indivisible just as the natures are, God is the Father of the Only-Begotten God

46. Cyril, *Paschal Letter* 17.3.65–71; see *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Lettres Festales*, ed. W. H. Burns et al., Sources chrétiennes 372 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 278. Also FOTC 127, p. 67.

47. Jn 6.38; 12.49; 8.28; 20.17.

on his own account, and it is on the basis of his divinity that the Son serves and ministers to his Father's commands. If we were to understand that the human baseness belonged to the divine nature, then to whom would we attribute such expressions as, "I and the Father are one," or places where he says that he acts in line with the Father, such as, "for just as the Father raises the dead, so also the Son makes alive everyone he wants to," meaning, of course, not just those he is told to?⁴⁸

Now of course it is quite true that, just as the Lord himself said, the Father is both God and Father. He is God of the flesh who, in the latter days, came from David's seed; and he is the Father of the Word of God, who was impassibly and eternally begotten of him, even while we take great care to acknowledge that this sonship exists in a single figure. What is more, if we do not divide up these expressions at all, how would we understand the pronouncements, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham existed, I am," and, "Everything came into being through him"?⁴⁹ Do we attribute these facts, namely, that he existed prior to Abraham and David and that all things came to exist through him, to the nature that came into being from David's seed in the latter days? Should we not rather quite properly insist that, even while we do not mix up the natures nor in any way divide up the union, the expressions should be matched up according to the significance of the two natures that have been united, just as we said before? They should be attributed to a single Son, Lord, and Christ, of course, but we do not just compress everything into a single nature!

What about verses such as, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who comes down from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven," and, "What, then, if you see the Son of Man ascend where he was not previously"?⁵⁰ In these cases we may recognize each nature under a single name because of that perfect union that no one can truly understand. The expression "Son of Man" must surely mean that which has been united to him in a way that neither confuses the two nor splits them up. Now, if he was calling himself "Son of Man" because he had

48. Jn 10.30; 5.19; 5.21.

50. Jn 3.13; 6.62.

49. Jn 8.58; 1.3.

taken upon himself a visible, fleshly nature, then it is just as true that he proved by his deeds that he is God. So we have, "Jesus Christ, through whom are all things," and, "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today the same, and forever."⁵¹ If he is "yesterday and today," how can "all things be through him"? And if "all things are through him," how can he be "yesterday and today"? The expressions, "all things are through him," "yesterday and today," and "the same forever," can all be trustworthy and genuine only so long as we match these expressions up in accordance with the different natures, which have themselves been united in a way that neither confuses the two nor splits them up. We realize that "yesterday and today" has to do with the visible nature, while "forever" has to do with the hidden nature. Because of the individuality of his Sonship, they are one and the same.

Cyril's Defense

These people who simply want to censure the anathemas, which are so crucial as far as we are concerned, without properly examining them, are not interested in talking about the truth. Their only purpose seems to be to make a real display of their excessively critical mentality. Were they to fasten their rather feeble and pedantic thoughts upon the Scriptures, they would realize that, far from proving that I wrote this anathema without any real understanding, they are in fact reinforcing it by their formulae and their arguments. How so, I ask? Well, that excellent friend of ours, Nestorius, when he was preaching in church, said something like this:

To say it as clearly as I can for everyone: the followers of Arius, Eunomius, and Apollinarius, as well as all of those who belong to their family, are very keen to use the title Mother-of-God because, by allowing for mixture and undivided natures, then none of the baseness associated with humanity need be implicated in divinity. They are able to preserve his sphere against any involvement with divinity by making out that everything said of him is said of a single subject.⁵²

51. 1 Cor 8.6; Heb 13.8.

52. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 273,5–12. This citation is taken from an oft-quoted sermon of Nestorius's. A longer version of the same passage is quoted at the

When we have Nestorius saying things like this, the anathema becomes all the more vital for preventing the one Lord Jesus Christ from being partitioned either into two persons or into two concrete existences. It is also quite obvious, if we look at what my accusers have written, that their ideas actually agree with my own. For example, they say:

But there is absolutely no need at all to match up different verses to two different persons, or to two concrete existences, or two sons, which would mean dividing up the union, the single Son. Whatever sort of argument or methodology you use, the perfect union simply cannot be divided, nor can the single Son. Now because we have held onto this perfect union by agreeing to the formula of one Son and Christ and Lord, everything that is said about him must be taken as being said about this one, individual Son. So it is the significance of the united natures that makes it appropriate to predicate all these expressions of the Son.⁵³

Right then, now that the union has been completely secured, what loophole is left, or what imaginary sort of division is there that could still be brought into the equation? Surely anyone who now at this point still dares to make distinctions would be veering right off the highway and giving up on orthodoxy altogether! How does the anathema put it? If any partition the expressions in this sort of way, so as to attribute some of them to a man who is thought of individually alongside the Word from God, and then think of others as being appropriate only to the Word of God, let them be anathema. Now, if dividing and splitting up the expressions, some of them to a man as one separate individual and others to God the Word as another separate individual, does not in reality imply a partitioning of the single Christ, or talking of two sons, then those critics of ours are indeed our opponents. But if to speak in this way does entail slicing him up, then how can they possibly criticize what we have said, given that they have themselves explicitly agreed that Emmanuel exists without division and is a totally and perfectly unified being? My own advice, and anyone with orthodox opin-

start of Cyril's *Second Tome against Nestorius*, and was later frequently used by the opponents of the Chalcedonian formula.

53. See above, p. 144.

ions would be with me, is that each and every expression needs to be understood appropriately, whether they are the ones that are said about Christ or the ones spoken directly by him. Some seem appropriate to divinity; others match more closely to the incarnate state. It is, however, because he is one and the same individual, at the same time both God and man, that he quite rightly says things that may be divine or may be human. But the real point is that both types must be predicated of the single Jesus Christ. We are not stripping the temple that came from the holy Virgin of its divinity, but neither are we imagining that God the Father's Word was without flesh after the indescribable union.

What shocks me is that while these busybodies are happy to examine my letters down to the finest detail (or so they reckon, anyway) and then ignore everything in them that is actually useful or important for demonstrating orthodox belief, they still launch vicious attacks on the basis of the very smallest hint of a suspicion, as they see it. And through these attacks they hope to be able to blackmail us. Let me quote what I said in my letter to Nestorius:

We do not partition our Savior's sayings in the Gospels between two concrete existences or two persons. The one and only Christ is not a duality, even if one thinks of him as having come together out of two distinct elements into an unbreakable union, in just the same way that one thinks of a man as constituted of both soul and body and yet as a single being, not a duality. But we are in the right when we maintain that both the human and the divine sayings were spoken by one subject. For when he says of himself, in a way that seems to refer to God, that "whoever has seen me has seen the Father," and "the Father and I are one,"⁵⁴ then we recognize in this his divine, indescribable nature, by which he is one with his own Father on the basis of their identity of substance, the image, the representation, and the reflection of his glory.⁵⁵ When, however, he is honoring humanity's limitations and so says to the Jews, "now you are seeking to kill me, a man who is speaking the truth to you,"⁵⁶ we still recognize that this is God the Word again, who is equal to and on a par with the Father, despite the limitations of his humanity. For we are obliged to believe that, while being God by nature, he became flesh, that is, a man whose flesh is endowed with

54. Jn 14:9; 10:30.

55. Cf. Heb 1:3.

56. Jn 8:40.

rational soul; then what reason would anyone have to be ashamed of his own words, even if they were appropriate for a man? For if he were to refuse to say things that are appropriate for a man, then who was making him become a man like us anyway? If he willingly demeaned himself into this self-negation for our sakes, why would he refuse to say things that are appropriate to that self-negation? So, then, all the expressions in the Gospels must be predicated of a single person, the one en-fleshed concrete existence of the Word, for the Scriptures say that there is "one Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁷

So, given what we have said already, there is no way we are going to be trapped being unsure about which aspect is appropriate for each saying, and there is also no way that we are going to allow these worldly and unspiritual types⁵⁸ to think in terms of two sons as a result of dividing up the concrete existences after the unfathomable union, or even to speak in such a way.

Since, however, at the beginning of their critique they cited a tiny fragment of my letter and threatened to censure us on the spur of the moment for having grievously sinned against the Word of God the Father, specifically for ill-advisedly attributing progress and growth to his own nature, something that is really appropriate only to the flesh, let us go on and say what really needs to be said by citing the whole passage from my letter. For they are frightened of the actual truth and are deceiving their audience by quoting only a part, and that is the part that seems most apt to enable them to misrepresent us in a way that makes them out to be quite reasonable. What I actually said was,

[E]ven when you hear that "Jesus advanced in age and wisdom and grace,"⁵⁹ you should not think that it follows that God's Word progressed towards being wise. Instead, recall what God's mouthpiece Paul wrote, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."⁶⁰ Nor should you be so rash as to suggest, unthinkingly, that this increase in age, wisdom, and grace is simply attributable to the man. My own judgment would be that that would be exactly the same thing as dividing the single Christ into two. But then, as I have just said, the Son who existed before the ages is said to have been "appointed Son of God"⁶¹ in the latter days of the age because, on account of the plan of salvation, he identified with his own flesh's birth. This is how he can be "his Fa-

57. 1 Cor 8.6. Extract is from Cyril's *Ep.* 17.8 (*Third Letter to Nestorius*).

58. Cf. Jude 19.

59. Lk 2.52.

60. 1 Cor 1.24.

61. Rom 1.4.

ther's wisdom" while also being said to "advance in wisdom." Although as God he remains all-perfect, he rightly took human properties upon himself so as to achieve the most complete union imaginable.⁶²

Why is it that, whereas God says, "judge with a just judgment,"⁶³ they reason against the truth? For we neither insist on separating the concrete existences after the union nor suggest that the divine nature was in need of any progress or growth. What we do affirm, however, is that, because the Scriptures say that he became flesh, he made the properties of the flesh his own because he identified with them as part of the plan of salvation.

I will try to show that the assembly of the holy Fathers agrees with this expression of the faith and with these judgments. In order to make this totally certain I will quote a part of the explanation that was made some time ago by Atticus of blessed memory:

Today the Lord Christ submitted to the birth that brings mercy to man; he put it in the forefront, even ahead of his divine honor.⁶⁴

In addition, he goes on to say:

Out of love for man, the Word became nothing, although he was not nothing in his own nature; for, "he emptied himself and took upon himself the form of a servant."⁶⁵ The fleshless became flesh for your sake, since "the Word became flesh."⁶⁶ He who had never been touched because his nature was not physical, was. He who had no beginning submitted to a physical beginning; he who was complete grew. The unchangeable progressed. He who was rich came into being in an inn. He who encircles heaven with clouds was swaddled. The king was placed in a manger.

When we read these following explanations from Julius and Felix, who were the leaders of the Roman church during that

62. Cyril, *Paschal Letter* 17.3.65-79, SC 372, p. 278. Also FOTC 127, p. 67.

63. Zec 7.9.

64. "Some time ago" refers to the era of the Council of Nicaea. The citations from Atticus of Constantinople, like most other patristic citations used here by Cyril, were also incorporated into the official anthology of quotations in the official records of the Council of Ephesus.

65. Phil 2.7.

66. Jn 1.14.

period, we came to appreciate that to divide up the concrete existences after union is not some harmless activity but actually entails completely reversing the holy mystery of the Incarnation.

From Julius, bishop of Rome:⁶⁷

God's Son is proclaimed as being incarnate of the Virgin Mary so as to make our faith complete. He made his dwelling among men. He was not acting inside a man (this is how it is in the case of prophets and apostles), but was both perfect God in flesh and perfect man in spirit; not two sons, where one was the real son who took the man to himself while the other was a mortal man taken up by God; rather, a single Only-Begotten in heaven, and also upon earth the Only-Begotten God.

From Felix, the holy bishop and martyr of Rome:

Concerning the Word's Incarnation, and our faith, we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary, that he is the eternal Son and Word of God and not a man who was taken up by God, in such a way that the latter might be another subject alongside the former. God's Son did not take to himself a man in this way, but, while being perfect God, he became at the same time also a perfect man, incarnate of the Virgin.

Seventh Anathema

If any say that Jesus's actions were carried out by God the Word as a man's would be,⁶⁸ and that he was endowed with the glory of the Only-Begotten as if he were another individual with a separate existence, let them be anathema.

The Orientals' Critique

No one would admit that our Lord Jesus Christ was controlled by the Spirit as a mere man, prophet, or apostle would be. On the other hand, we are not going to deny or do away with those apostolic expressions about him that take account of his visible

67. Julius and Felix were active popes from the period of the "Nicene Fathers" in the middle years of the fourth century. The following citations were commonly attributed to them as paragons of orthodoxy, although their real provenance was the erstwhile heretic Apollinarius.

68. See n. 58, p. 111, in the defense against Theodoret, above in this volume.

fleshly nature, such as, "according to that control of his mighty power which he exercised in Christ when he raised him from the dead," and, "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death," and, "raised up by the power of God," and so forth.⁶⁹ Now, even though these things are said with reference to what is visible, no one would thereby believe him to be a mere man who is being controlled, nor to be simply a righteous man, or a prophet or apostle. So we are not going to do away with or deny those expressions that denote his divinity, but neither are we going to start blasphemously throwing anathemas against what was also said about his visible, fleshly nature. At the same time we are not saying that he was controlled as a mere man or a righteous man would be, or a prophet or apostle. After all, he did not use the expression, "thus says the Lord," but because he was the Son and the Lawmaker he said, "I myself tell you."

Cyril's Defense

So now we are just going to use exactly the same arguments in our defense as we did before. We all agree that there is a single Lord Jesus Christ, that we believe in a single individual who is both the eternal and pre-existing Word of God the Father and who became a man in this latter part of the age, miraculously born of a woman in the flesh. Because he was a single Son, God, and Lord, he performed miracles by his superhuman strength, which assuredly proves that, even though he became flesh, he was still absolutely God, and the power of the Father. When he became a man, he did not stop being what he had been before. So when he accomplished his miracles, such as rebuking demons, crushing Satan, bringing sight to the blind, raising the dead, commanding the raging sea with a word, he was not being exalted as a man might, like some other separate Christ, as if he were nothing but a holy prophet or an apostle. No, it was for himself that he obtained his glory, so that from whatever

69. Eph 1.19-20; Acts 2.24; 2.33. In the last quotation, Andrew has substituted "power" for "right hand," a variant that does rather support his argument about the biblical language of the Father's power at work within the Son. It is, however, an otherwise unknown variant.

angle you look at it, even though he had become a man, people would believe that he is really God by nature. That is why it is wholly absurd to allow Nestorius to say things such as:

The activities of the Trinity are held in common and are also distinguished among the separate concrete existences. The glory of the Only-Begotten was attached at one time to the Father, at another time to the Spirit, and at another time to the power of Christ.⁷⁰

So these folk who want to criticize us must prove that "Christ" is a different being, someone who is a separate individual, and is understood as such, someone to whom the Only-Begotten Word of God attached his power because he was really a different and individual son besides himself. Otherwise, if it is not a case of one individual here and another there, but is rather a case of their being one and the same, that is, the Only-Begotten who came from the Father and a man who in his flesh came from the Virgin, then surely they are under an obligation not merely to keep quiet but actually to wield the power of the truth as a bulwark against Nestorius's stammerings, which are nothing but baubles beside the jewel of orthodox doctrine.

So the Son was, and is, God; since at that time he donned humanity's finiteness, he made the plan of salvation effective and willingly endured everything for us by making himself nothing. This is why one may say that the Father brought him to life, even though he was really himself Life by nature; and one may say that he received glory, even though he was himself the Lord of glory. And so that Hebrew of Hebrews, the true lawgiver from the tribe of Benjamin, wrote, "Paul, an apostle sent not by men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and through God the Father who raised him from the dead,"⁷¹ and who gave him glory. To balance this, although one may say that he received glory from the Father, which might be taken to entail the finiteness of being human, he was aware that, insofar as he is under-

70. This quotation comes from another of Nestorius's sermons and was again used by Cyril in the documentation at Ephesus. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 225, 13-18. Its reference to the way that the Only-Begotten's glory at one time belonged to Christ's power may have been the motivation for Cyril's seventh anathema in the first place.

71. Gal 1.1.

stood to be, and indeed is, God, he possessed a glory above that of created things. He said, "Everything has been given to me by my Father," and, "No one but the Father knows who the Son is, nor does anyone know who the Father is but the Son and those to whom the Son reveals it."⁷² Maybe one of those academic types will say: if everything has been given to you by your Father because you lacked glory and if you needed to have infinite power bestowed upon you because you are human, then how can you go on and say that it is impossible for anyone to know you merely with their human understanding in just the same way as one cannot know the Father? Quite right, he would reply; in terms of what you can see, knowledge about me is not veiled, for I am God in flesh and blood, and one may know me in terms of my flesh, but in terms of my actual divine nature and glory I am God's equal and I transcend all understanding and every description. So, then, we will hold onto what has been prescribed and will not deny the apostolic sayings, God forbid! Neither would we oppose descriptions of the Incarnation by either thinking or saying anything unreasonable. Instead we consistently follow the Holy Scriptures and treat what the Fathers have said with the greatest importance. We only oppose people who are perverting the church's orthodox doctrines.

No one would doubt that when it says that the Father raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, this refers to him acting specifically upon the flesh. But he himself is the life-giver and God's active power, who gave life to his own temple and said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in three days."⁷³ So, then, this body to which he imparted life was not a different thing, nor did it belong to some other man like us. It was the Word's very own.

Eighth Anathema

If any dare to say that the man who was taken up should be worshiped, glorified, and named together with God the Word, as if they were two separate individuals, rather than honoring

⁷². Mt 11.27.

⁷³. Jn 2.19.

Emmanuel with a single act of worship and ascribing to him a single act of praise, seeing that the Word became flesh, let them be anathema.

The Orientals' Critique

We would not say that they are to be worshiped "together" or glorified "together" as if there were two persons, concrete existences, or sons, or as if our worship were to be given to the flesh and to God the Word separately. No, we would offer a single act of worship, and so forth, to one Son. One may then add the term "together," as Cyril himself does in his first treatise:

You see, although in his role as the Word he continued to sit together with his own Father, and although his existence by nature depended upon him and remained within him, he still listened, with his flesh, to the words, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."⁷⁴ That is the way in which we reckon that we, and the holy angels too, should worship him.⁷⁵

It should be added that Cyril is being excessively pedantic when he denounces those who wish to worship the single individual Son "together with" his flesh, as if this phrase "together with" meant anything different from the word "with," which is the word he himself used in the above quotation when he said that the Son ought to be worshiped "with" his flesh, while at the same time denying that the flesh should be worshiped "together with" the divinity.

74. Ps 110.1 (109.1 LXX), though Andrew is thinking of New Testament uses of this verse in reference to the incarnate Christ, such as Mt 22.44 and especially Heb 1.13.

75. Cyril, *Paschal Letter* 17.2.90-96, SC 372, p. 266. See also FOTC 127, p. 62. It was this letter that sparked the controversy with Nestorius. (Andrew refers to it as "the first treatise," which is also how he referred to a quotation from the *Letter to the Monks*, above.) "Together with": The Greek compound element *sun-*, which may be added to verbs such as "to worship" or "to glorify," was rejected as a Nestorian invention by Cyril; but his critic here finds an instance in his own writings in which he encouraged the worship of the Son "with" (*meta*) his flesh. The argument here is that the two terms cannot mean anything different and so Cyril is again contradicting himself.

Cyril's Defense

God's mouthpiece Paul spoke with great insight when he said, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are still in the faith."⁷⁶ You see, whenever the human mind veers off the highway or shifts its position away from orthodox thinking, then its love of itself tends to make it wary and fearful of ever calling its own ideas false. But it may very easily correct itself by attending carefully to the hard work that was exerted by those holy Fathers who are justly and universally renowned for the orthodoxy and precision of their doctrine, and then by carefully testing one's own faith against theirs. Anyone with common sense would be sure to follow their judgments, because they also filled their own minds with the apostolic and evangelical tradition and based their own theological writings purely and flawlessly upon the Holy Scriptures. They were "stars in the universe, holding out the word of life,"⁷⁷ as the Scripture puts it. So, our father and bishop Athanasius, who is held in such very high regard, wrote as follows on the subject of our universal Savior Christ:

We confess that he is the Son of God and God in the Spirit, and man in the flesh. We do not confess that this single Son is two natures, one to be worshiped and one not to be worshiped. He is rather one incarnate nature of the Word, and is to be worshiped, with his flesh, with a single worship. There are not two sons, one the true Son of God who is worshiped, and the other a man from Mary who is not worshiped, but who has become a son of God by grace in the way that men do.⁷⁸

And again a little further on:

So the one who is begotten of the Virgin Mary is God's Son and is genuinely God by nature, not simply by grace or a sharing of essence. In his flesh alone he is a man from Mary, but in the Spirit he is himself God's Son and God.⁷⁹

76. 2 Cor 13.5.

77. Phil 2.15-16.

78. This citation was one of those later identified by Leontius of Jerusalem (*Against the Monophysites*, ed. Gray, p. 121) as being actually from the pen of Apollinarius (see Lietzmann, *Apollinaris*, 119-21, 146-47, 250). It included the famous expression "one incarnate nature of the Word," which, although for Cyril it summed up orthodox Christology, became a bone of contention once its "heretical" origins had been demonstrated.

79. Lietzmann, *Apollinaris*, 251, 12-15.

And again:

If anyone teaches anything beyond what comes from the Holy Scriptures by talking of the Son of God and then of another one who is from Mary, one who is adopted by grace as we are; if they talk about two sons, one who is in his nature the Son of God who is from God, and the other a man from Mary who is Son by grace; or if someone says that the flesh of our Lord is from heaven and not from the Virgin Mary, or that the divinity was turned into flesh, or was confused with it, or was altered into it, or that the Lord's divinity could suffer, or that our Lord's flesh should not be worshiped because it is a man's and not the Lord our God's, such a person the holy and catholic church anathematizes under the impulse of the inspired apostle who said, "If any preach to you something beyond what you received, let them be anathema."⁸⁰

Even though Athanasius had advisedly written all this, that man Nestorius chose to attack Christ's glory and gave free rein to his unguarded tongue on the same subject. There is one place where he says this:

We would confess God in a man; we would pay reverence to a man who is worshiped together with God by being connected with God the Word.⁸¹

Is he not very obviously calling Christ a god-bearing man and saying that a man was simply connected with God, perhaps on the basis of something that Paul once said: "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him"?⁸² But surely it is more accurate to say that the same individual is at the same time both God and man rather than, as some man understood, to be a separate individual who has a contingent connection with God. Consequently, after the inexpressible union, even if someone were to call Emmanuel God, the Word of God ought to be understood as in a state of being made man and being incarnate. Even when we call him a man, we know that he is also the Word of the Father himself. It is, therefore, one thing to say that the Word of God the Father is one Son even after the flesh had been united to him, and quite another to say that God was "in a man," which

80. Gal 1.9. The entire extract is from Lietzmann, *Apollinaris*, 253,3-14.

81. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 249,2-4, although the citation there is taken from another slightly different version found in the second of Cyril's *Tomes against Nestorius*.

82. 1 Cor 6.17.

is really no different from how he was in the prophets, or even in us ourselves, by means of the Holy Spirit. If you want to be quite safe and avoid any criticism, then I would advise you to say that the incarnate Word of God, because he exists as a single Son, is not something other than his own flesh, but rather that he should be worshiped with it—somewhat like the way in which a man's soul is honored with his own body; he is denoted by a single name because, like a creature, he is constituted out of those two elements. So then, how could anyone bear it or pass over such an obvious insult in silence when, because you are so keen to discuss Christ our universal Savior, you end up dividing what is single into two and you pronounce that there is a man understood as a separate individual, and then are even so bold as to suggest that one must worship this man together with God, that they should share the name of God, as if he who is Son of God by nature were another Christ besides him? You ought rather to have said: "We would pay reverence to the Word of God, who has become a man and is called God and is worshiped in this humanity because he is also God by nature and made visible from God the Father."

"But look here," my opponents shout, "we have caught him writing in his own letter that the Son sits together with his Father even with his own flesh. How can that be any different from saying that the man is to be worshiped together with God the Word and given the name of God in common with him? For the expressions 'together with' and 'with' mean just the same thing." Well, my riposte would be that they have no idea about the meanings of these words and no grasp on the real issues that are at stake here. When the discussion has considered closely what elements have come together to become, or to compose, the single person and nature, or concrete existence, then it may use either of the terms, "together with" or "with," because it has already secured what it denotes and has thereby defined it as a single composite entity rather than dividing it into a duality. But once the concrete existences have already been split into two, and then, as well as understanding each of them as a separate individual, one goes on to use these expressions, "together with" or "with," then they would in effect indicate at least two entities,

if not more, rather than a single composite entity. It would be like saying that a man's soul is to be honored "together with his own body," if some of its honor belonged to the one man, who derives from both elements; that is, if someone were to say that his soul is a single creature "with his body," then he would not thereby be dividing the single man into a duality in any way at all. On the contrary, he would be demonstrating that he knew full well which elements he was derived from, or which composed his nature. When, for instance, you say, "Peter is designated as a man together with John," or that "John went up to the temple with Peter," you are not using terms such as "together with" or "with" to denote a single entity, since Peter and John are not a composite entity and the pair of them do not go to make up a single man. Why, then, are they so playing around with the truth by dividing the single Christ into two? If they reckon that to say that "the Son sat together with his Father along with his own flesh" leaves room to be interpreted as meaning two sons, then let them ask whether we are saying that the one Son is honored with a single "sitting together" or with two, one for the body alone and the other for the Word. But they cannot show this to be the case. How so? Because we would insist that the Son, who is one with his own flesh, is a single individual, at the same time both God and man, who is honored with a single "sitting together" with his Father. But then to say that the man is worshiped together with God and that they are together given the name of God is really tantamount to admitting that there are two objects of worship and two beings who share a name with each other. Any such argument is both simplistic and at some distance from being accurate or orthodox, and that is why I wrote this anathema, which is directed against people who in any way divide Emmanuel into a man and God the Word as individuals. Both the writings of the Fathers and the genuine interpretation of the Holy Scriptures declare to us that he is one.

✠ Ninth Anathema

If any suggest that the one Lord Jesus Christ was glorified by the Spirit by making use of a power that came through the Spirit,

a power that was something other than his own, and that he received from the Spirit the ability to overcome evil spirits and perform divine miracles for people, instead of saying that the Spirit by which he wrought the miracles was his very own, let them be anathema.

The Orientals' Critique

Once again it will be appropriate to make a note of something he has said once before and to point out that he seems to have forgotten what he himself has written. He proved not just that the Lord performed his miracles in the Spirit, but that he was also raised from the dead in the Spirit. In his first treatise he wrote as follows:

If then he did not experience death in the flesh, as the Scriptures say, then neither was he raised to life in the Spirit.⁸³

We need, then, to take a closer look at this self-contradiction, because in this anathema he denies that the Lord expelled demons and performed miracles by the Spirit of God and he ignores what the Lord expressly says in the Gospels, that "if by the Spirit of God I cast out demons."⁸⁴ We, in contrast, confess that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the miracles both by his own power and by the Spirit's activity. He did not make use of the Spirit's power because he did not have any of his own. To deny that the Holy Spirit was present at the same time is tantamount, I would say, to a denial of the Holy Scriptures, because even when it says that the Father performed miraculous deeds, it is still the Son who is doing it, as in the verse "The Father remains in me, and he performs the deeds which I do."⁸⁵ After all, everything that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son. So even when it says that the Spirit did it, as in the verse "if by the Spirit of God I cast out demons," it is still the Lord who is doing it, in the Spirit. The Son is not something foreign to the Father and the Spirit, and the activities of the Trinity are neither separate nor individual. Rather, any activity that is de-

83. *Ep.* 1 (*To the Monks*) 25.

84. Mt 12.28.

85. Jn 14.10, 12.

scribed in the Scripture as belonging to one of the concrete existences belongs to the Trinity as a whole. For instance, there is one place where Scripture says first that the whole of creation is the Son's doing: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established," and then that it is the Spirit's: "and all their host by the Spirit of his mouth."⁸⁶ It obviously was not because the Father was incapable that the Son acted to create the world, nor was it because the Son was too weak to create that the Spirit helped out (it does say, after all, that "all things were created through him").⁸⁷ The reason why the Scripture predicates the very same things sometimes of the Father, sometimes of the Son, and sometimes of the Spirit, is to commend to us the doctrine that the members of the Trinity are equal in substance, in honor, and in power. We thus understand everything to depend upon a single divine substance, out of which the Only-Begotten was born, without experiencing suffering, seeing as he was the Word who has a real and substantial existence.⁸⁸ The Spirit, too, itself proceeds from that substance and exists in its own individual concrete existence, since the single substance leaves its mark on each of the three concrete existences. No one of them can be understood as being something different from what that substance really is,⁸⁹ but each is distinguished from the others in terms of its own characteristic, definable properties. When there is but a single substance, a single power, and a single will, how can there possibly be individual activities? All these things are held in common, and so there is definitely only one activity.

Cyril's Defense

Do I really need to bring forward evidence to prove that my opponents are willing to write meaningless rubbish and that they are prepared to insult us most unadvisedly? Yet their own

86. Ps 33.6 (32.6 LXX). Normally, "breath of his mouth," but the translation "Spirit" makes the argument clearer in this case.

87. Jn 1.3.

88. "real and substantial existence": *enousios kai enupostatos*.

89. "what that substance really is": *logos tēs ousias*, an expression taken from the opening to Aristotle's *Categories*.

argument, I would say, proves my point all by itself. What we clearly maintained in this anathema was that the Holy Spirit belonged to the Son and performed miracles through him. Yet, despite the fact that they keep on insisting that I have forgotten what I said, they have become so crass as actually to believe that I said that it was not by means of the Spirit that Jesus expelled the demons! How dishonest is that! If they really do not think that expelling demons counts as a miracle, then they can say whatever they want! Let them initiate a prosecution against me! Let them charge me with not making this clear enough and not mentioning miracles at all. But if expelling demons is actually just as much of an astonishing miracle as any of the others, then why do they reject a perfectly good way of speaking as useless and run away from the obligation to speak accurately as if it were something rotten? Why do they set so much store on the gibberish they throw at us and yet deem of very little interest something that is universally condemned by God and man? I reckon they have forgotten the time when Christ said, "How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? Hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."⁹⁰

It is not from their arguments that we have learned that the Holy Trinity is consubstantial, equal in power and activity. It was the Holy Scriptures that made us certain of this. It is perfectly straightforward to see that this anathema in no way undermines the arguments for orthodox doctrine; rather, it upholds them. The anathema is designed to prevent people from dividing up the one Lord Jesus Christ and splitting him into a man and God the Word as separate individuals, as we have been pointing out constantly, as if he could be understood as being two persons or concrete existences severed from one another. It also prevents people from saying that, in order to have performed his miracles, Jesus must have been controlled by the activity of the Spirit as a normal man might be. This would make him no different from those holy apostles and prophets who through heaven's

90. Mt 7.4-5.

mercy were filled with divine gifts and were able to say, "By the grace of God we are what we are."⁹¹ To say such a thing as this is perfectly apt for a holy man, who has received a notable portion of God's gifts, but not at all for Christ. For the Holy Spirit is his very own, just as, of course, it is also the Father's own. He acts by means of the Spirit in just the way that the Father also does. Furthermore, even though he said to the Jews, "I have shown you many good works from the Father," and, "I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father lives in me, and he accomplishes the deeds," and, "if by the Spirit of God I cast out demons,"⁹² he attributes the activity done through the Spirit both to himself and to the Father because they all share in the one substance. Now a great deal more could be said on this subject, but I think the time has come to broaden our discussion, if you are willing to follow. We would not, then, say that Emmanuel was controlled by the Spirit as by some power other than himself. Rather, he made use of it by his divine status and possessed as his very own the power of the Spirit, which was consubstantial with him. When the blessed disciples performed miracles, they said, "My friends, why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this lame man who sits by the Beautiful Gate walk?"⁹³ Christ's Spirit belongs to him!" Well then, this is what I say to those who are trying to satirize what we have written: if it is part of their whole purpose to partition what cannot be partitioned and to say that Jesus was controlled by the Spirit as a normal man would be, then there is not much more to be said about people who are so disposed; but if they do agree that there is a single Christ, Son, and Lord, that the same individual is at the same time both God and man, then like us they ought to believe that he was not controlled by a power that was better than he or different from him, but that it was he himself who enacted the miracles by means of his own Spirit, which has the power to do anything. Enough now of these pointless tirades and jealous outbursts.

91. 1 Cor 15.10.

92. Jn 10.32; 14.10; Mt 12.28.

93. Acts 3.12.

✠ Tenth Anathema

Divine Scripture says that Christ became “the high priest and apostle of our confession”⁹⁴ and that he “offered himself for us as a sweet-smelling savor to God the Father.”⁹⁵ Therefore, if any say that it was not the Word of God himself who became our high priest and apostle when he became incarnate and a man like us, but another, separate individual besides him, one born from a woman, or if any say that he brought this offering on his own behalf rather than just on our behalf (for the one who knew no sin was not in need of any offering), let them be anathema.

The Orientals’ Critique

If God the Word is a high priest, then who was his God? To what sort of deity can he have brought his offerings? He has forgotten that the blessed Paul wrote, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in every way, though without sinning.”⁹⁶ Who is this who was tempted? Was it God the Word, or was it the human nature, David’s seed? Once more, “No one takes the honor upon himself; rather, he is called to it by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest.”⁹⁷ Who is this who is compared directly, in terms of his priestly honor, with Aaron himself, with someone who did not take that honor upon himself, but was called to it by God, and who was raised up to priestly honor? Is it really the divine nature that is co-eternal with the Father and which possesses all that the Father does as its own? What sort of honor could he have been raised to that was higher than what he already had? Shall we really say that the priesthood is a more honorable thing than the divine nature, and that he ascended to it not by himself but only through God’s calling him there, and that he was then glorified through it? Or was this David’s seed, which came into

94. Heb 3.1.

96. Heb 4.15.

95. Eph 5.2.

97. Heb 5.4, 5.

being and was set apart, and to which, through the psalmist, God swore that the priesthood should be given in eternity? What he swore was, "The Lord will not change his mind; you are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."⁹⁸ Was it really the divinity of the Only-Begotten that accepted these oaths from God that he would receive an eternal priesthood and be glorified through that? Which of us could bear to say, or even think, such a thing? Who would not condemn us if we suggested that God was appointed high priest and had received those sworn promises, that he was called to that priestly honor rather than receiving it by right, and that he was to be compared to the man who was the first to receive it? Again, it says, "He says in another place, 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'"⁹⁹ Who is this whose order of priesthood is compared to that of Melchizedek? Is it really right to think that it is God the Word or the human flesh that he took and which was united to him without division or confusion? It goes on to say, "During the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death."¹⁰⁰ Was it really God the Word who offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him, and who "was heard because of his piety and learned obedience from what he suffered"?¹⁰¹ Well, if this high priest is God the Word, then it follows that he himself "learned from what he suffered and was made perfect."¹⁰² But do not let yourself be worried when you hear about the one who suffers, "even though he was Son."¹⁰³ There is no need for us to talk of two sons, one who suffered and another who remained without suffering, nor is he who is from David's seed given the name of "Son" separately from the divinity or on his own account, as if the divinity were himself no longer called "Son" after the union apart from his visible flesh. After the union, the sonship is one with both the natures, because they are not separated from each other; in fact, after the union, there is no separation at all; the unity lasts forever. Even when it comes to suffering, the divinity cannot be separated

98. Ps 110.4 (109.4 LXX).

100. Heb 5.7.

102. Heb 5.8-9.

99. Heb 5.6.

101. Heb 5.7-8.

103. Heb 5.8.

from its flesh, even though the former is impassible, and those things that pertained to divinity were made perfect through the flesh. That is why we can acknowledge a single individual to be one and the same Son, even though the natures remain unconfused. We do not talk about one individual and then another (God forbid!) but only of one and the same individual. Everyone will happily agree that the Holy Scriptures say that our Lord Jesus Christ became our high priest and apostle, but not that the man who is of a woman was a separate individual from the Word of God the Father. We can then say that it is because the one who is of David's seed was inexpressibly united, without confusion or division, to the Word of God, that, in his role as high priest, he could be tempted in every way, yet without sinning, and learn obedience from what he suffered, and that his very own flesh could bring offerings to God the Father on our behalf only, not for himself too. It would be inadvisable for us to say that God the Word was a high priest or that he himself brought offerings to God the Father, for God is not the Father of the Only-Begotten One's divinity, but simply Father.

Cyril's Defense

This is the moment when we ought to ask our adversaries, "How long will you waver between two poles?"¹⁰⁴ It is high time you developed a more appropriate and exacting attitude towards the real science of theology, rather than being handicapped by your wavering ideas, your diseased mind, and your unwillingness simply to walk in a straight line! Those who have wavering ideas are unstable in all they do, and they do not receive anything from the Lord.¹⁰⁵ And I say this while I am still somewhat in shock at just how readily and viciously they are prepared to attack this anathema that we are now discussing. It is not at all surprising that they should be wary of our using the title "apostle and high priest of our confession" in reference to the Word of God the Father, even after he had become a man. After all, anyone who tries to belittle his nativity in the flesh or who dares to cast it aside,

104. 1 Kgs 18.21. See n. 80 at *Against Theodoret* 9, p. 118, above.

105. Cf. Jas 1.7–8.

as though it were not genuine, and who avoids calling the holy Virgin "Mother-of-God," is bound to miss out on various aspects of the salvation plan. We should take heed to what Isaiah said: "If you will not have faith, then neither will you understand."¹⁰⁶ When he said that the Word had become flesh, John the evangelist, who is God's mouthpiece, was speaking words that struck the earth like the most massive thunderbolt. Only those who disregard the real meaning of these words would say that it means that he became flesh in the sense of becoming a sin and a curse.¹⁰⁷ We already discussed this particular topic earlier and said there all we needed to prove their arguments wholly facile. To those who are pressing us on this, all that we need add for the moment is this: just accept the basic mystery of Christ, the fundamental principle and, so to speak, the starting point of the plan of salvation; have faith in the Holy Scriptures, as we do; accept the decree of truth and agree that the Only-Begotten Word of God, who is in the Father's bosom, through whom and in whom are all things, became flesh, not after experiencing a change of mixing, but remaining always what he naturally is, was, and shall be. He became flesh after experiencing birth from the holy Virgin (in the flesh, I would add), he was called the Son of Man, and he partook of blood and flesh for our sakes. To people who are confident of this and who accept this faith as sacred and genuine, everything becomes totally transparent and straightforward rather than an uphill struggle. As it is written, "All things are clear to those who understand, and right to those who find knowledge."¹⁰⁸

It is now the moment to explain how this anathema arose. That Nestorius, who is always mixed-up and turns things completely on their heads, said the following about our universal Savior Jesus Christ:

He was sent to preach repentance to the captives: this is the man who was made a faithful high priest toward God (for he came into existence, not pre-existing eternally). This was the man—you heretic!—who progressed little by little towards the dignity of high priesthood.¹⁰⁹

106. Is 7.9 LXX.

107. See the discussion of the first anathema. Scriptural allusions are to Gal 3.13 and 2 Cor 5.21.

108. Prv 8.9.

109. Pusey, *Tomes*, p. 99.

He goes on to add other things besides this, which give birth to comparable profanities. On hearing such outrageous expressions, who would not prefer to go through any trials rather than prefer to remain silent, which would be so abhorrent to God? Christ died for us; he scorned shame and endured the cross¹¹⁰ and death in the flesh. Should we not repay our benefactor with the service of speaking out? Or do we just sit back quietly while we listen to such crazy calumnies? Or even partake in these accusations that he so wantonly waffles on about? What on earth are you suggesting? That he only became high priest little by little? Even though he who was God the Word emptied himself, even though he who was naturally free took upon himself the form of a servant, even though he who was superior to all coming-in-to-existence and who exulted in his divine transcendence humbled himself! If he “progressed,” in what sense could he have emptied himself? How could he have come down to this low state? Who would suggest that this self-emptying was the thing that first introduced him to glory and honor? What would be the point of his emptying himself in that case?

But then, they say, if the very Word of God the Father became a high priest, who is the one that is greater than he, the one whom he is attending to by his priestly service? Then I simply say yet again, have faith that, even though the Son is naturally divine and in the form of the Father, he “did not intend to grasp at equality with God; instead he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.”¹¹¹ If he did indeed become a man and took upon himself the form of a servant, then how could one reckon that being called “apostle and high priest” is at all insignificant or ill-suited to expressions about the plan of salvation? How could he who did not scorn our human limitations have considered human things as so much garbage to be cast aside? I suppose it would be quite easy to say lots more and to extend this discussion much further. But leaving that option aside for now, I would rather bring some further quotations from what these individuals have written:

110. Cf. Heb 12.2.

111. Phil 2.7.

There is no need for us to talk of two sons, one who suffered and another who remained without suffering, nor is he who is from David's seed given the name of "son" separately from the divinity or on his own account, as if the divinity were himself no longer called "son" after the union apart from his visible flesh.¹¹²

And then also:

That is why we can acknowledge a single individual to be one and the same Son, even though the natures remain unconfused. We do not talk about one individual and then another (God forbid!) but only of one and the same individual. Everyone will happily agree that the Holy Scriptures say that our Lord Jesus Christ became our high priest and apostle, but not that the man who is of a woman was a separate individual from the Word of God the Father.

So then, if, as they put it, there is a single Son, and if they do not at all divide him into two sons (one being from David's seed, the other the Word of God the Father), how are they not still undermining the mystery by partitioning the plan of salvation between man and God, since all things, whether human or divine, belong to him? You see, when someone says something about him that is especially fitting for a god, we say that it is absolutely correct, since we know that he is God, and if what is said is something more appropriate to a human, we would also assent. For we confess that God exists in flesh and blood, and we recognize, through these human things, the limitations of humanity. Thousands upon thousands of holy angels are serving him, and the seraphim are standing around his divine throne.¹¹³ When he became a man, he was given the title of high priest, not in the sense that he was offering his sacrifice to a god greater than he, but so as to procure our confession of faith both in himself and in the Father. You are ashamed when you hear that he was given the title of high priest for humanity's sake. So why are you not amazed when I say that the type of sacrifice he made was not the usual one for priests but was rather made for himself and for the Father? I would agree with you when you say that making sacrifices is not a suitable activity for God, but that is an accurate thing to say only if the Word

112. See the Orientals' critique above for both these quotations.

113. Cf. Dn 7.10; Is 6.2.

was separate from the flesh. When he became human, however, look at how he makes sacrifice on behalf of humanity and also, as God, with transcendent honors, since he is enthroned next to God the Father. Look at how he both makes sacrifice at the human level and yet is enthroned as God. What did the blessed Paul say? “We do have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”¹¹⁴ So, seeing as he became human while being God, and that the Son is one and the same individual, we can attribute everything to this one individual. We are fully aware of the ways of the plan of salvation, and we are always exerting the full strength of our intelligence to obey him with all our sense and skill.

Eleventh Anathema

If any do not confess that the Lord’s flesh has the power to give life and that it belongs to the Word of God the Father himself, but think that it belongs to another individual besides him who is connected to him as a matter of honor or as if he were merely in possession of a divine indwelling, rather than, as we already said, that it is life-giving because it has become a property of the Word, who has the strength to give life to all, let them be anathema.

The Orientals’ Critique

It is all right to confess that, because of the union, our Lord’s flesh belonged personally to the Word, so long as one realizes that it was taken from us. There is no need to add that it does not “belong to another individual besides him,” unless of course he is denying that the flesh was assumed from us. To repeat so frequently that the Lord’s flesh is of our nature almost amounts to a denial. Where is our boasting? Who, according to Paul, “raised us up and seated us”?¹¹⁵ How could anyone’s flesh belong to anyone other than himself? Surely each of us has flesh that is common to everyone by reason of their consubstantiality, but

¹¹⁴. Heb 8.1.

¹¹⁵. Rom 3.27; Eph 2.6.

which is also personal insofar as the flesh of each person is not someone else's but belongs solely to him whose flesh it is. What is he trying to achieve when he says that "it belongs to him," as if it could have been someone else's? If he reckons that the Lord's flesh was taken from our own and also reckons that the flesh of each person belongs to him whose flesh it is, rather than belonging to someone else, then why does he say that it belongs to him like some foreign thing? Or is it the case that this is just a veil covering his actual denial that his flesh is taken from our own nature? He said it more clearly in his first treatise:

The baby was not like us; that is to say, he was not in our likeness in a simple and straightforward manner, yet he was among humanity on account of the flesh and he was divine insofar as he surpassed us and came from heaven.¹¹⁶

And then in the second treatise he says:

What was born from the Virgin was not the body of some other one like us; rather, it belonged to him who is the Word of the Father.¹¹⁷

Who would ever suggest that the Lord's flesh might have belonged to any other person that ever lived? Perhaps it was Abel's, or Noah's, or Elijah's, or [belonged to] some other figure from the past? Not only have we already explained that the Lord's flesh did not belong to anyone else who ever lived, but also that it belonged solely to the Lord, who was united without confusion or separation to God the Word. Moreover, as we have said, the flesh of each one of us could never come to belong to anyone other than the person whose flesh it is. Given that the entire church is in agreement with us on this point, what on earth is he trying to achieve by repeating so often that the flesh belonged to him, unless he is actually denying that the flesh is of our own nature? How can he forbid us from saying that he was connected to it as a matter of honor or power, given that in his first treatise he says:

116. Cyril, *Paschal Letter* 17.3.9–12, SC 372, pp. 273–74. Also FOTC 127, p. 65.

117. *Ep.* 1.20 (ACO 1.1.1.20.9–11). Andrew now attributes to the "second treatise" another citation from the *Letter to the Monks*, previously cited from the "first treatise."

This is how we have been made rich by his poverty, by our human nature being raised up in him to a level of honor that is appropriate to divinity.¹¹⁸

But we would retort to him (and he is contradicting himself here), that if the natures remain unconfused, while the unity also persists, and we continue to say that worship, power, honor, and authority ought to be offered as if to a single Son, precisely because the natures remain unconfused within the union, then what else need be said to describe the union any more exactly? We would concede and agree with him, just so long as the natures are not to be confused. It seems clear that nothing will satisfy him as a way of expressing the absolute unity, for fear of confusing the natures. We, however, keep the natures quite safe from becoming confused, and we confess the most absolute divine and incomprehensible unity, while we offer all of it for the glory of both the Father and the single Son, and we say together with the blessed Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of God."¹¹⁹

Cyril's Defense

At the time when those awful Jews, mentally wounded by the arrows of jealousy, worked themselves up into an unholy anger, and when they even tried to lay their unholy hands upon Christ (our universal Savior), he ordered them to explain why they dared to do such a thing: "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you stoning me?" But they had got to such a point of insanity and unholy intentions that they even tried to bring him down with accusations of blasphemy, by saying, "We are not stoning you for any good work, but for blasphemy, because you, although you are a man, are making yourself out to be God." The Savior replied by saying, "Is it not written in your law, 'I have said, You are gods'? If he called 'gods' those people to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be set aside, then why are you saying that the one whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world is

118. Cyril, *Paschal Letter* 17.2.87–89, SC 372, p. 266. Also FOTC 127, p. 62.

119. Mt 16.16.

blaspheming, because I said that I am God's Son?"¹²⁰ We have thoroughly investigated what is meant in this passage by his "being sent," and we have collected information on this point from all over the Holy Scriptures. He himself said through Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and to open the eyes of the blind."¹²¹ We would argue that when the Son became a man he was "sent" by God the Father. Both the term and the reality of "mission" are especially appropriate to the limitations of the self-emptying.¹²² The Word of God the Father was sent, as I have said, not naked and without flesh, but rather he experienced being born in the flesh, or taking to himself a body, from the holy Virgin. Once this body had been united to him without confusion, in some way that cannot be described, then the Lord God appeared to us according to the Scriptures. We say, therefore, that the body came to belong to the Word rather than to some man individually and separately, someone thought of as being another besides Christ the Son. We should think of it happening to Christ in just the same way that each of our bodies is said to belong individually to us. Even though it is akin to our own bodies, and consubstantial with them (since he was born of a woman), it is thought of, and spoken of, as belonging to him. Since the Word of God the Father is by nature life itself, he demonstrated that his flesh has the power to bestow life. This is just how the gift of life was bestowed upon us. And so Christ said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven and gives life to the world," and then, "This bread that I am giving is my flesh, for the life of the world," and then, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them."¹²³ See how he always refers to his own body, the one that came from a woman, because the unity was such an absolute one. Since this

120. Jn 10.32-36.

121. Is 61.1; Lk 4.18.

122. The terms here translated "sent" and "mission" are based on the same verbal root, which is central to Cyril's argument here. This is difficult to bring out in English.

123. Jn 6.51, 33, 56.

is the grounds of the mystery, Nestorius in his own explanation of it said this:

Listen carefully to this saying and what it means: "the one who eats my flesh." Bear in mind that he is talking about his flesh. It was not I who called it flesh, lest I seem to my opponents to be misinterpreting it. What he said was, "the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood," not, "the one who eats my divinity and drinks my divinity." It goes, "The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him." Bear in mind that he is talking about his flesh. "Just as the living Father sent me," that is, "me, the visible one." But maybe there are times when I misinterpret. Let us listen to what comes next: "just as the living Father sent me." My opponent says that he means the divinity; I say that he means the humanity. Let us see who it is who is misinterpreting this expression: "just as the living Father sent me." The heretic says that here it means the divinity, [as if it said,] "The living Father sent me, God the Word, and I, God the Word, am alive because of the Father." After this, "and he that eats me will live." What are we eating, divinity or humanity?¹²⁴

We have talked enough now about all this extraordinary nonsense of his. What he is hoping to achieve by denying that God the Word, incarnate and made man, was sent, while also asserting (as he says) that the visible person was a separate individual, I can hardly say, though his trick of logic is patent enough. He completely does away with the notion of the union so as to conclude that Christ's body is just a common human one rather than belonging personally to the one who has the power to bestow life. Admittedly everything at the human level is insignificant to God the Word, but since he was reckoned worthy to experience self-emptying for the world's deliverance, even though he is said to have been sent to proclaim freedom for prisoners and to open the eyes of the blind, still he is glorified for having undergone the humiliation of becoming incarnate for salvation's sake. I do not suppose anyone in his right mind would criticize him for bringing himself down to our level for our own sakes. Is this not the man who, by arguing that the visible person was some other Son and Christ besides the Word of God, to whom alone God assigned the task of mission, came up with the doctrine of cannibalism? Is he not the one who took

¹²⁴. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, 227,20–228,16.

the minds of the faithful and profanely directed them towards insipid ideas? Is he not the one who tried to subject to human logic ideas that may be grasped only by an unquestioning faith? The fact that it was not the divine nature being eaten does not entail that Christ's holy body was a common human one. But what must be realized, as we have said before, is that the body belonged especially to the Word, who makes all things live. It was able to bestow life because it was the body of a living being. This is how the Son brings life to our mortal bodies and overcomes the power of death. The Holy Spirit of Christ bestows life upon us in just the same way, for "the Spirit is life-giving," as our Savior said.¹²⁵

It would not hurt to introduce some quotations from the holy Fathers, lest it may seem that it is only I who say that the Word's body belongs to him. Then my opponents may realize that there is no point to their tirades since I am always following what they have already said. So here is the well-known father Bishop Athanasius in his work on the subject of the Holy Trinity:

He showed that he had a body, not in appearance, but in truth. It was appropriate for the Lord, when he put on human flesh, to put it on whole, together with the sufferings proper to it; so that, just as we say that the body belonged to him himself, so we may also say that the body's sufferings belonged to him himself, even though they did not touch him as far as his divinity was concerned.¹²⁶

And also:

We have had to examine these points so that, whenever we see him doing or saying anything divinely through the instrument of his own body, we may know that it is as God that he is doing it.¹²⁷

That is what our blessed father Athanasius had to say. It should be added that, even though one speaks of the Word's body as belonging to him, it did still come from a woman and it is of the same sort as ours, as one would expect flesh to be. The blessed Paul says that "the first man was from the earth, the second from heaven," and Christ himself says that "no one has

¹²⁵. Jn 6.63.

¹²⁶. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3.32.

¹²⁷. Ibid. 3.35.

gone up to heaven except the one who comes down from heaven, the Son of Man."¹²⁸ I would argue, however, that the Word did not say this because he had brought down from heaven the body that was united to him. It is precisely because, despite his being from heaven above, he nonetheless made the body that was united to him (in a manner that cannot be described or understood, without any change or confusion) his very own, that he could still say that he was from heaven even after he had become a Son of Man. So, given that I am expressing myself perfectly accurately and irreproachably, how can these people who are so fond of criticizing us really use this as an opportunity for their sophistry? If the anathema is fighting a battle against certain profane formulae, then is it opposing the truth with a lie? Personally, I think it is entirely appropriate for me to say that Christ is above us, since, even when the Word of God became a man, he was nonetheless not so only above us, but was also over the whole of creation, since he is not reckoned only to be a man like us, but also the same individual is reckoned both to be God above and to be from heaven.

Twelfth Anathema

If any do not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, tasted death in the flesh, and became the firstborn from the dead, because as God he is both Life and the Life-giver, let them be anathema.

The Orientals' Critique

We may here, yet again, remind him of what he himself has said about the divine nature being totally devoid of suffering. In his first treatise, he wrote as follows:

The one who is more worthy than all others laid down his life for the sake of all, and for a short time he allowed his flesh to be brought low by death for the sake of the plan of salvation. But then, as Life, he destroyed death and refused to suffer anything contrary to his own nature.¹²⁹

¹²⁸. 1 Cor 15.47; Jn 3.13.

¹²⁹. *Ep.* 1 (*To the Monks*) 25.

Let us say this to him in his self-contradiction: how can you first say that this individual allowed his flesh for a short time to be brought low by death and, as Life, destroyed death and refused to suffer anything contrary to his own nature, and now say that he “suffered in the flesh”? It is not the case that God suffered while attached to the flesh, but rather that the flesh, while united to God the Word, underwent its usual experiences by the Word’s permission, for neither suffering nor death would happen without being allowed to. If death does not occur without permission when a soul is present, how could either suffering or death disturb his personal habitation, without permission, when God is present—and not just present, but even attached by the strongest possible union comprehensible only to himself? It is not the case that God suffered while attached to the flesh, but rather that the flesh was allowed to undergo its usual experiences. It is patently obvious that he has insidiously used this expression, “he suffered in the flesh,” so as to lead simple folk astray. Someone who says that “he suffered in the flesh” can hardly be preserving the impassibility of the divine nature, since to say that “he suffered in the flesh” is exactly the equivalent of saying that “he suffered with his flesh,” and if one admits this latter statement, then one has confessed him to be passible.¹³⁰ Either he suffered because he was passible by nature or else he suffered contrary to his own nature. If the former, then the Father too must be passible since he is consubstantial with the Son (since everything that is true of the begotten must be true of the begetter). Otherwise we would be confessing that the Son suffered because he was prone to do so while the Father remained apart from suffering, but if we said this we would be in agreement with the heretics who argue, from the fact that the Only-Begotten’s divinity was passible while the Father’s was not, that the two are therefore not consubstantial. On the other hand, if they were to argue that he suffered contrary to his own nature, we would respond by asking what kind of suffering is

130. The argument depends upon the nuances of Greek prepositions and is not transparent in English. The expression translated “in the flesh” means something like “in respect of the flesh” or “insofar as he was flesh,” whereas the expression translated “with the flesh” means “together with/alongside his flesh.”

so much stronger than the divine nature that it can force what is naturally impassible into suffering something contrary to its own nature. He might answer, "It was his will," and we would say, "His will is impassible, whereas we are looking for a type of suffering that can alter an impassible nature into its own form of suffering. Besides, the divine will only desires things that are appropriate for it." He will say, "What could be more appropriate than to save the human race?" And how exactly is he going to save the human race? By transforming it into a state of impassibility, or by pulling the divine and impassible nature down into suffering? The impassible is quite sufficiently strong to transform anything to its own level. What is the point of anything being passible, if even what is impassible can become passible? The salvation of the passible does not consist in its being in an association of passibility with the impassible. This would simply mean an increase of evil rather than its destruction, and passibility would likewise increase rather than being destroyed. So in what, then, does the salvation of the passible consist? It is not, as I have said, in the association of the impassible and the passible, but in the transformation of the latter by the former. What the Lord Christ did was not to bring himself, in his divinity, down to a state of suffering, but rather, by means of his holy flesh, to raise his entire humanity up to the heights, to drag what was lying on the ground up to heaven, and to make worthy of adoption what up to then had been without any freedom. What was it that was in debt to death because of its disobedience? Of course it was not the divine nature; it was the human nature. What could it possibly need to give in repayment to the death that comes from disobedience?

Cyril's Defense

The power of truth can really be relied upon, and experience is a witness too. I do not need to spend a long time defending myself on this one, or indeed explaining how those who think that I said that the Word's divine nature is passible have been deceived, once they have refuted themselves by their opposition and openly agreed that we stand wholly cleared of any

charges on this point. Since they are making good use of their highly attuned intellects and are striving to demonstrate the strength of their competence by rather foolishly setting out an argument that makes them happy but which does not actually require proof, and since they are constructing an argument to prove that the Word of God is impassible in his own nature, let them therefore listen to us when we tell them that their battle is utterly futile and that they are “beating the air”¹³¹ with nobody arrayed against them and no difference of opinion. Who would bother breaking a sweat to no purpose or stretching themselves to get something superfluous? Who would be so stupid as to describe as passible the most superior substance of all, or dare to pull what is above all becoming and is without material body down into the instability that characterizes created things? Since the very basis of the mystery is that the Only-Begotten Son, who belongs by nature to the Father, became a man for the sake of the plan of salvation, and since I affirm that the holy body that he took from the blessed Virgin actually belonged to him himself, for this very reason I can quite appropriately say that the sufferings of the flesh are called his own, in the context of his appropriating them for the sake of the plan of salvation, while always preserving the impassibility of his own nature, since he is God from God. So when we say that he suffered in the flesh, he is not reckoned to be suffering in his very own nature, insofar as he is God. Rather, he made the suffering his very own. The body that was united to him became his own, as we have just stated. This is why Paul, God’s mouthpiece, said that he, the one through whom and in whom the Father made everything, became the firstborn from among the dead. This is how he put it:

... giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, who has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. This Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, because in him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him; and he is before all things, and

131. 1 Cor 9.26.

in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy, since God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, by making peace through the blood of his cross, whether things on earth or things in heaven.¹³²

Think about how he says here that through him all things were created, visible and invisible, thrones and powers, and that he was made the head of the church, and how he insists that he became the firstborn from among the dead, and that through him he reconciled to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, and that he made peace through the blood of his cross. After this, who could possibly be in any doubt? Who could pointlessly worry that the very basis of the mystery would show the Son's nature to be passible even when it is said that he suffered in the flesh? As we have said, the sufferings that belong to the body he made his very own. This was also what Peter, that mouthpiece of God, thought appropriate, when he said, "Christ suffered for us in the flesh."¹³³ It is one thing to say that he suffered in the flesh, but quite another to say that the suffering was in his divine nature. Because the same individual is at the same time both God and man, impassible insofar as his divine nature is concerned, passible insofar as he is human, what is so extraordinary if one says that he suffered in respect of what is apt to suffer, while he remained impassible in respect of what does not experience suffering? The whole assembly of the holy Fathers was conspicuous for holding just this sort of belief. Let us take another look at what they have written. They were holding on to the Savior's command, remembering that he had said, "Freely you have received, so freely give."¹³⁴

From the blessed Gregory, bishop of Nyssa:

"May you have the same attitude as did Christ Jesus, who, although he was in God's form, did not intend to grasp at equality with God; instead he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant."¹³⁵ What could be poorer when compared to God than the form of a servant? What could be more humiliating for the Ruler of the universe than willingly

132. Col 1.12–20.

134. Mt 10.8.

133. 1 Pt 4.1.

135. Phil 2.5–7.

to enter into an association with our impoverished nature? The King of kings and Lord of lords donned the form of a servant. The Judge of all became a taxpayer to the authorities. The Lord of creation descended into a cave. The one who held the universe in his hand could find no room at the inn and was cast into a feeding trough for animals. The one who was wholly pure accepted sordid human nature and, by passing through extreme poverty, even entered into the trial of death. Look at the extent of his voluntary impoverishment. Life itself tasted death. The Judge was led into a court. The Lord of all living things submitted to the decree of a magistrate. The King of all transcendent power did not disdain the hands of common men.¹³⁶

From Basil, bishop of Caesarea:

For even heaven and earth and the great seas, even the creatures that live in the water and on the dry land, even the plants, the stars, the air, and the seasons, even the vast variety in the order of the universe do not display God's transcendent power nearly as well as does the fact that God, although he is incomprehensible, was able, impassibly, through flesh, to have come into close conflict with death, so that by his own suffering he might bestow impassibility upon us.¹³⁷

From Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria:

He showed that he had a body, not in appearance, but in truth. It was appropriate for the Lord, when he put on human flesh, to put it on whole, together with the sufferings proper to it; so that, just as we say that the body belonged to him himself, so we may also say that the body's sufferings belonged to him himself, even though they did not touch him as far as his divinity was concerned. If then the body had been another's, then the sufferings would have been attributed to him; but if the flesh is the Word's (for "the Word became flesh"), then the sufferings of the flesh must also be said to belong to him, whose the flesh is. And the one to whom the sufferings are ascribed, such things as being condemned, being scourged, thirsting, the cross, death, and the other infirmities of the body, his also are the triumph and the grace. This is why it is consistent and fitting that such sufferings are not ascribed to someone else, but to the Lord; that the grace may also be from him so that we do not become man-worshippers, but that we be genuinely devoted to God, because we do not call upon anything that came into existence or upon any ordinary man, but upon the natural, genuine Son of God, the very one who became a man, yet is not thereby any the less Lord and God and Savior.¹³⁸

136. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Beatitudes* 1 (PG 44:1201B).

137. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 8.18.

138. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3.32.

These citations are quite sufficient, I reckon, to make the point to sensible folk, since the divine Scripture is quite explicit that "every saying shall be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses."¹³⁹ If anyone still wants to argue about this, then let him listen to me: he has gone off by himself; I am the one who is stating the truth and keeping in line with both the sacred Scriptures and the faith of the holy Fathers. I am thereby winning the prize of the heavenward calling in Christ,¹⁴⁰ through whom and with whom be glory to our God and Father, together with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

¹³⁹. Dt 19.15.

¹⁴⁰. Cf. Phil 3.14.